**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR FY13 AppLCC RFPs**

**Held March 23rd and April 3rd, 2013**

**Questions and Answers: Appalachian FY13 RFP Session, March 25th 2013**

**Attendees:** There were at least 9 organizations/ institutions (Appalachian State University, American University, Geoconcepts Engineering, NatureServe, USGS, Environ, Virginia Tech. University, Downstream Strategies, and the Nicholas Institute) and 15+ people on the call.

**Question 1:** Instructions for the RFP refer to page limits. For example –may not exceed 4 pages. What does that include or not include (i.e. references)?

**Answer 1:**Page limits are set within the Application Template, specifically within the Cover Page and Scope of Work. Only the most relevant references should be included.

**Question 2:** The RFP is not clear on how long (in time) projects can run.

**Answer 2:**Project should be completed within 12 months of contracting whenever possible. However, as stated in the Timeline section, “*Completion of milestones and deliverables can exceed one year’s timeframe, however significant milestones/deliverables must be well demonstrated by end of first12 months, and timeline commitments must be adhered to unless written approval is obtained at least 4 months in advance from the Appalachian LCC Coordinator*.” It is the Steering Committee’s expectation that both projects can be completed within approximately 18 months.

**Question 3:** Mapping all karst locations in the LCC region is a massive undertaking. Do you want them mapped or do you want the methodology developed to map them?

**Answer 3:** Both development of a classification system and mapping of the resources are desired. If you believe either the timeline or the available budget is insufficient, you may propose an alternative scope of work. Please reference the RFP Project Narrative: “*It is anticipated that this Project may be executed in multiple phases and applicants are encouraged to evaluate the scope of work and to prepare the proposal to execute any or all of these Phases with the funds available and timeline*” and the Application Template “*Project (SOW) Narrative**(include all relevant phases by area of study, steps or sequencing of Project elements, and benchmarks or milestones linked to proposed timeline): Step-by-Step Process to Completion (and if any deviation from that suggested in the Project Description is proposed, provide full justification)*.”

**Question 4:** The RFP refers to “enhanced ranking criteria.” Can we get clarification on what these criteria are?

**Answer 4:** Enhanced ranking criterion will address offers of leveraged support (in-kind or cash), reduction in overhead rates below the maximum caps announced, and other demonstrated and possibly creative means to improve the cost effectiveness of the project and ensure the overall success of the project deliverables.

**Question 5:** What metrics are used to determine “significant” karst resources?

**Answer 5:** That is not a defined term within the context of the RFP, and will be left to the applicants to propose how they will address what is “significant” considering their expert knowledge, end-user decision-support needs, and the budget/timeline available. This should be explicitly addressed in the proposal.

**Question 6:** Please provide more details on what is wanted in terms of decision support tools. Can you point out examples?

**Answer 6:** The Appalachian LCC is committed to making sure that products resulting from all RFPs eventually take a form that is easily digestible and accessible to on-the-ground resource managers that make most conservation decisions. Our expectation is that the datasets, maps, etc. will be integrated and shared with the AppLCC communities (except where there are data sensitivity issues and applicants are encouraged to review the data requirements as include in the RFP announcement) as an interactive interface via our web portal at <http://applcc.org/>. There are many forms this could take, and we encourage creativity and simplicity. Applicants my wish to consider consulting directly with resource managers to get a better sense of their needs for decision-making support to enhance their conservation efforts.

**Question 7:** I’d like clarification as what can be submitted as a direct charge and what should be included in overhead costs.

**Answer 7:** Any costs that are not directly used to complete the proposed deliverables or support staff doing so, should be considered overhead. Direct charges include such things as salary and possibly fringe benefits, travel expenses, etc. for science staff conducting the proposed work. No salary or other support is available for administrative support, including supervisory unless that individual also is a scientist who is critical to the mission at hand. Generally, it will be expected that the applicant and/or partners are providing office space, telephone and internet service, office supplies, and other incidentals. If you are unsure, please contact the AppLCC Science Coordinator (contact information within the RFP).

**Question 8:** I noticed the RFP discusses holding meetings. Should I include the costs to conduct these meetings in my proposal or will the LCC underwrite them?

**Answer 8:** Yes, please include your estimate of these costs in your proposal.

**Question 9:** Please provide a definition of what’s considered to be a sub award.

**Answer 9:** The Wildlife Management Institute/Appalachian LCC will not enter into sub awards. The funds awarded under these RFPs will be contracted with one lead researcher/vendor, in other words, only one contract will be signed with one vendor for an approved Scope of Work. Any funds that require payments be made outside of that primary contractor (for example, for additional contracted services) will have to be sub awarded by the successful RFP applicant through their own institution or agency.

 **Question 10:** Would you entertain applications that address areas that are geographically smaller than the entire region encompassed by the Appalachian LCC?

**Answer 10:** Yes, however, proposals that best meet the deliverables in the RFAs will have the best chance of being selected for funding. Applications that address the entire AppLCC region will likely be looked upon more favorably during the selection process than similar proposals that address smaller areas.

**Questions and Answers: Appalachian FY13 RFP Session, April 3rd, 2013**

**Attendees:** We had 5 representatives from American University, USGS, DownStream Strategies, Va. Tech., and Monclair University on the call.

**QUESTION 1:** In the Ecosystem Services RFP, is it the members of the LCC Steering Committee that are targeted for attending meetings or others?

**Answer 1:** It could be both; AppLCC staff with work with you to determine appropriate attendees.

**QUESTION 2:** How often does the Steering Committee meet in person?

**ANSWER 2:** At least twice per year, with at least quarterly conference calls or meetings.

**QUESTION 3:** Should we build in funding for travel costs for participants to attend meetings in our proposal?

**ANSWER 3:** Yes, the LCC’s travel funds may not be used for funded research projects and any anticipated project travel needs be represented in proposal budgets.

**QUESTION 4:** There are page limits on the proposals but no limit on attachment length. Can we include additional content in the attachments?

**ANSWER 4:** No, we need to keep the playing field level for applicants and ask that you only provide the information specified in the RFP.

**QUESTION 5:** What’s the difference between a Principle Investigator and a Project Manager?

**ANSWER 5:** A Principle Investigator is the lead, provides project oversight, and is responsible for ensuring deliverables. A Project Manager may be someone appointed by the PI and charged with project implementation. Many times they are one and the same, but not always.

**QUESTION 6:** In the Cave/Karst RFP, is your objective to develop a decision support tool or an interactive website?

**ANSWER 6:** We want a decision support tool that can be utilized via our AppLCC web portal. The strength of the Proposal will be evaluated in part by the proposed level of direct support to managers that must make decisions in their resource management and conservation planning. We plan to also establish, now or in the future, the capacity to allow users to input new data to the system and submitted proposals should include this capability, or if this exceeds budget available, at least take this need into consideration in their design.

**QUESTION 7:** Relative to the previous question, what are you looking for in terms of a commitment for maintenance of the tool?

**ANSWER 7:** The proposal should include any anticipated maintenance for a minimum of one year. But applicants should be aware of the underlying role of LCCs to provide continuity and on-going support to our community. The Web Portal is the major tool to deliver our tools and products and data and programming should be expected to reside on the AppLCC.Org site (which utilizes open source programming or suite of tools and is hosted on a PLONE environment.)

**QUESTION 8:** Can you delay the start of the project from May 1st?

**ANSWER 8:** The dates are clearly stated in the RFP. Any deviation will need to be specifically requested in the Project Proposal and if selected, will be subject to further negotiation. But given the reality of starting up major research it is probably not unreasonable to suggest anytime over the summer (i.e. In the first Quarter of contract activity) would be fine.

**QUESTION 9:** How much salary from other sources can we build into our leverage estimates?

**ANSWER 9:** There’s no limit and generally the more leverage you can generate, the better.